

Boley: A Study of A Negro City.

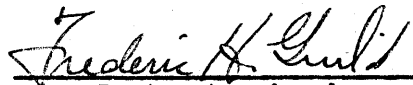
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Submitted to the Department of
Political Science and the Faculty
of the Graduate School of the
University of Kansas in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts.

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May 15, 1930.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS WITH GRATITUDE.

To the Officials and pioneer citizens of Boley for the information so willingly furnished.

To Professor F. H. Guild for his valuable suggestions and constant encouragement as this study progressed.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction.

The enactment of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution was a direct challenge to the American Negro to prove his fitness as a political being. Since the adoption of these amendments, many conflicts have arisen which may be traced to a reluctance on the part of many of the majority group to abide by the rules and principles of law thereby established. Such action on part of the majority group was to a certain extent justifiable in the beginning due to the fact that the change was so sudden that the minority group could not readily adjust itself to the new situation and also due to the fact that certain unscrupulous whites were taking advantage of the negroes to further selfish interests.

Such well known phases of American History as the Negro carpet-bag rule of the south and the enactment of educational qualifications and grandfather clauses are evidences of the political conflicts precipitated by the aforesaid
1.
amendments.

Of more recent times the poll tax requirements applied in a discriminating manner and certain party rules prohibiting Negroes from voting in primaries may be cited as con-

crete examples of that struggle. At present, such discriminatory practices have been recognized by courts as being unconstitutional, the last official blow having been dealt by the United States Supreme Court in the Texas primary case of Nixon v. Herndon decided in 1926.^{2.}

In spite of history, which is teeming with proof of the remarkable political as well as economic advance of the American Negro, there are yet those of the majority group who are not convinced that the minority race is capable of assuming the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. For a discussion of problems confronted by the colored population in assuming their political role in American cities, the above cited references are especially valuable.^{3.}

Much has been written concerning American cities and communities of mixed population. There are also writings available concerning certain purely negro cities in negro countries and colored districts within mixed cities.^{4.}

There are, however, no writings concerning negro cities governed by negro officials and having an entirely negro population, and incorporated as such within the states of the American union. There are approximately eight such communities located in Oklahoma, Mississippi and other southern states, most of them being in Oklahoma. There is one community in the north governed by negroes, seven miles south of Camden, New Jersey, but this town has several white citizens.

One of the towns referred to above owes its existence to an argument between certain white citizens on the question as to whether the American Negro is capable of self-government. Thus Boley, Oklahoma stands as a monument to a man who took the affirmative side of the question and sought to substantiate his argument by demonstration.

It is because of its historical significance as well as its present status that this town is chosen for study. Boley, a town of nearly 2,000 inhabitants is located in Okfuskee County about 100 miles south of Tulsa and 90 miles east of Oklahoma City, and is recognized as the largest colored municipality in the United States.

The study was made by means of extensive correspondence and by personal observation and investigation. The general question which motivated the research was that of evaluating the Negro as a citizen and voter in the light of modern attitudes and principles.

The specific purpose of the study, however, was to find answers to such questions as:

To what extent has the Negro made use of his political, economic, and social opportunities, so far as can be determined by the study of a single Negro American City?

What political, economic, and social tendencies are manifest in a community of American Negroes as citizens of an independent, self-governing all-negro city?

To what extent does racial homogeneity influence the political, economic, and social conditions of a municipality of American Negroes?

It has been impossible, of course, to get concrete answers to these questions, but the data presented in the following pages is a more or less accurate description of conditions as they exist, from which the reader may form his own conclusions.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL ASPECTS.

Territorial Stage.

In order to establish a background for the study of this town, it is perhaps necessary that we consider the salient features in the history of the state of Oklahoma, from a historical point of view, one of the most unique and interesting states of the union.

The control of the territory within which lies the present state of Oklahoma, was first claimed by the United States in 1803 as a result of the Louisiana purchase from France.^{5.} On May 28, 1830, the assignment of the western part of the Louisiana purchase to the Indians was adopted as a formal policy of the United States. As a result of the repeal of the Missouri compromise and the organization of Nebraska and Kansas, the Indian territory in 1854 became confined to the area south of the 37th parallel - thus the place of Oklahoma^{6.} as the Indian state was established. The name Ok-la-ho-ma is taken from the Choctaw Indian language. Its literal translation is "home for the red men".^{7.}

The history of the Indian territory during the period from 1866 to 1879 is the history of a struggle for the concentration of the Indians and the establishment of a territor-

ial government.

The concentration of red men in this territory was partly accomplished, but all efforts of the Indians to form an officially recognized territorial government were futile. Many of the Indians were opposed to any plan for organized government which they looked upon as only a plot, the aim of which was to deprive them of their land and enforce upon them the civilization of the white man.

During the decade immediately preceding the opening of Oklahoma to whites (1879-89) many efforts were made to occupy unassigned land in the territory. These invasions were made chiefly by Kansans along the southern border of Kansas. 8.

The struggle for the settlement of the territory of which the present state of Oklahoma was a part was brought to a close on April 22, 1889, when President Benjamin Harrison issued a proclamation opening the territory to settlement. 9. The settlers immediately began to organize city governments. Although these governments had no legal authority, they proved to be of great value in establishing and maintaining order.

By an organic act of May 2, 1890, this region was formally recognized as a legal territory and its government was set up in the usual manner. Guthrie was named the temporary capital and remained so until June 11, 1911, when Oklahoma City was chosen as the leading city.

This thrilling and historic drama was brought to its

close Nov. 17, 1907, when Congress admitted the Indian Territory and the Territory of Oklahoma as the State of Oklahoma, the forty-sixth of the United States. Benjamin F. Harrison, Secretary of the State of Oklahoma in 1912, emphasizes the importance of the history of this state in the following lines: "Yesterday, a seat of improvised tents and habitations less provided - today, colossal marts and palatial homes. Oklahoma is the scene of the final stand of the Indian against the white man's civilization."^{10.}

The Negro in Oklahoma.

As a result of an article written by E. C. Boudinot, a Cherokee citizen, and published in the Chicago Times of Feb. 17, 1879, in which it was stated that there was unoccupied public land available in the Indian Territory, the "Freedmen's Oklahoma Association" was organized in 1881. The object of this organization was to obtain land for freedmen in the territory.^{11.}

In 1882 negro freedmen living in Kansas and other states sent petitions to Congress asking that they be permitted to settle in the unoccupied land of the Indian Territory and form organized communities of their own.^{12.} On June 13, 1882, Henry W. Blair, senator from New Hampshire requested information from the Secretary of the Interior as to the land in the territory available for occupation by negroes. Before waiting for a reply from the Secretary, Blair, on June 16, introduced a bill authorizing freedmen to enter certain unoccupied land in the Indian Territory.

In July, he received a letter from the Secretary stating that only the freedmen of the five civilized tribes would be permitted to use this land.^{13.}

On January 14, 1884, President Arthur sent a special message to Congress recommending an appropriation of \$25,000 to enable the government to place the freedmen of the five civilized tribes and their descendants in the Oklahoma district of the Indian Territory. The five civilized tribes were the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole and Creek. The proposed plan provided that one hundred and sixty acres of land were to be given to each head of a family, eighty acres to each single man over twenty-one years of age, and eighty acres to each minor orphan.^{14.} Congress failed to act upon this recommendation. Had it acted upon such, a Negro State would probably have been formed in the Indian Territory.

The history of the Negro in Oklahoma is one of peculiar significance. He was first brought there as a slave to the Indian. By treaties of 1866, some negroes were received into Indian tribes and given equal tribal rights and equal shares in their lands. Others participated in early "runs" for settlement and secured homesteads which, in many cases, are still retained by the same families.^{15.} Still others migrated from other states at more recent times.

The state seems to be especially adaptable to the formation of separate negro communities. Negro sections of cities

are common, just as in many cities of other states, but the separate negro town is a rare phenomenon. In this state, there are five such towns; namely, Boley, Langston, Red Bird, Tatum, and Lima. Another such town was created under the name of Taft, but it has not succeeded. The others are governed, managed, and populated chiefly by negroes. It is because such towns are rare that we set out to ascertain the chief factors involved in their creation and present status. We shall confine our study as aforesaid to only one such town, that of Boley.

History of Boley.

It was during the period from the opening of Oklahoma to settlement, in 1889, to the founding of Boley in 1905, that Thomas M. Haynes, the founder of this colored town migrated to this territory. In a frame wagon drawn by two old gray nags, he and his family of two children, travelled from the southeastern part of Texas to the present site of the town of Boley. His first abode was a dug-out about two miles east of the town. 16.

At this time tracks were being laid in this region by the Fort Smith and Western Railroad Company. The employees were in charge of a roadmaster by the name of Boley, commonly known as "Captain Boley". The distance of 15 miles between the settlements of Okemah and Prague was so great and the means of travel so inconvenient that in favorable weather the employees of the railroad would not go home at night but would, in their language, "bunk" in the work cars. It was in this way that they formed

the acquaintance of Haynes, whose dugout was not far from the tracks. His humble home served as a meeting place and later as a boarding place for the employees. Captain Boley became impressed by the congenial personality of Haynes and the two became good friends.

The Captain had a white friend in Weleetka by the name of J. C. Lakemore, who was deeply interested in the Negro and who because of his wealth was quite influential in the community. Lakemore had dared to engage arguments in defense of the Negro as a race. He told Boley of one of his arguments and of his intention of proving the validity of his contentions.

Certain citizens doubtless representing the general opinion of the residents of Weleetka, had advanced the proposition that the Negro as a race was incapable of self-government; that in the absence of the supervision and direct leadership of a white man, negroes would destroy themselves and could not live together in a reasonable degree of peace and harmony.

Mr. Lakemore did not agree with these contentions, but keenly felt his inability to offer convincing evidence to refute them. Captain Boley suggested that he try to establish a negro community. The suggestion was considered as a huge joke at first, but the roadmaster strengthened his suggestion by reminding Lakemore that he knew a Negro a few miles west of Weleetka whom he looked upon as being capable of managing a

negro town. He further promised Lakemore that if he should set aside land for that purpose he would lend him any assistance that he might be able to give.

Lakemore, after thinking the matter over, decided to accept the suggestions. He, with the co-operation of Boley, leased eighty acres of land from the guardian of Abigail Barnett, a young girl. This land was leased for a period of five years with option to purchase (1899).

Immediately after leasing the land, the next problem was to select a name for the prospective settlement. Haynes insisted that it assume the appellation "Boley". The question was decided by the flipping of a quarter. Haynes chose "heads" and won the toss, consequently the town was named "Boley".

During the next five years the land was rented by lots, most of the lots being used for agricultural purposes. At the expiration of the lease (1904) two hundred dollars were paid the original owners as first payment on the land. Steps were taken to have the town duly organized for local self-government. Upon petition by twenty or more citizens in accordance with
17.
Sections 2387-2388 of the United States Revised Statutes, (1890), the town was incorporated on March 30, 1905. The introductory statement to the notice of incorporation reads as follows:

"To whom it may concern:

Notice is hereby given, that on the 30th day of March A.D. 1915, petition was filed in the United States Court for

the western district of the territory at Sapulpa, by more than twenty (20) petitioners, residents of the territory proposed to be incorporated under the town name of Boley and a majority of all male inhabitants above twenty-one years of age residing in said territory, that the territory proposed to be incorporated embraces the following land to wit:- . . . " ^{18.} The charter was granted by the United States Court sitting at Wewoka.

Haynes, though a man of meager literary training, demonstrated his managerial ability by the manner in which he conducted the campaign of advertisement and by the results of the movement. He hired agents to travel throughout the south advertising the community of Boley and urging Negroes to purchase lots and make this town their home. Letters were written to ministers asking them to assist in the dissemination of information regarding Boley.

The advertisements were written up in a very attractive and appealing manner, using such maxims as "Boley is your town" "Boley - the Negro's Paradise" "Boley Welcomes You- Dark Brother" "Move to Boley and Live in Peace" "Buy a Lot- Build a ^{19.} Home in Boley". Nearly a thousand such advertisements were circulated. Negro preachers were especially useful as agents for the circulation of such advertisements. They would make mention of the community to their congregations.

As a result of this extensive drive, many colored citizens were attracted to the community, the immigration being at

its height during the period from 1905 to 1910. Most of those who came decided to remain. A few, however, failed to be so impressed and hence withdrew.

Among those who remained, several have become outstanding characters in the Negro business and professional world. Two examples might be cited of men of this pioneer group, who are at present holding offices in the National Negro Business League and the National Negro Medical Association.

The present mayor came to this community in 1905. Having more money than the average Boley immigrant, he chose to do his part by financing a banking concern. The bank, at present incorporated under the name of Farmers and Merchants Bank started in a poorly equipped office with a capital of five hundred dollars, and under the name "Turner Trust Co.". Today it has a capital of \$10,000 and is generally considered as one of the most progressive Negro banks in the United States. More in detail will be given about the institution in a later chapter.

A certain physician with whom the writer conversed came here in 1907, two years after the incorporation of Boley. When he arrived in the town, he had only a few dollars. There were two other doctors in the community at that time, one of whom has left. After practicing his profession, for a few months in the community, the physician under discussion was able to purchase a lot, upon which, several years later, he erected a building which now bears his name. It is a three-story structure of brick and

limestone, with a drug store on the ground floor and offices including his own, on the second and third floors.

CHAPTER III

GOVERNMENTAL ASPECTS.

General Characteristics.

The town today has a population of nearly 2,000. In 1920 the population was 1,624.^{20.} It has an area of about nine square miles most of which lies in a somewhat level tract west of the Fort Smith and Western tracks at a point about thirty miles west of Weleetka. Records show and pioneer citizens testify that up to the present writing, no white man has ever lived in Boley. There is no evidence that any person of caucasian race ever spent a night within the confines of this town.

The settlement and development of the town has been carried on for the most part, by Negroes. It is this feature of the community that makes it a unique specimen for social study.

The down-town district as in the case of most rural towns is quite restricted, constituting with the main residential district, an area of about eight blocks square. The principal business street extends from the station northward a distance of about twelve blocks. The business district is concentrated, primarily on this main street, within the central eight of those blocks. Few people are seen on the streets of the business section during the week, but on week-ends farmers and their families fill the stores and places of amusement to such an extent that

a considerably congested condition prevails.

Certain features of this community, remind one of the New England town, with its nucleated village and outlying rural district. The group of residences of Boley clustered about the business district are surrounded by farm houses, owned and operated by Negroes at a radius of about three miles, although most of the Negroes within a radius of six or seven miles recognize this town as the center of population.

Many of the leading citizens of Boley are those who own farms and reside on the outskirts of the city. Some of these men are members of the board of education, officers in the business organizations, and political and social leaders.

The most exclusive residences are located on the northeast side of town. The first citizens lived in tents, taking over the custom of the Indians. Later they began to build shacks. The first modern residence was constructed by two white contractors from Okemah. The city seems to have been built up quite rapidly. Nine or ten public buildings and twenty-six dwelling houses were built during the first five years of its existence. Since that time only five public structures and about seventy-five residences have been constructed.

Mayors.

The first mayor of Boley was its founder, Thomas M. Haynes. His administration lasted until 1911 when he was succeeded by an equally able leader, J. H. Ringo. His services as mayor

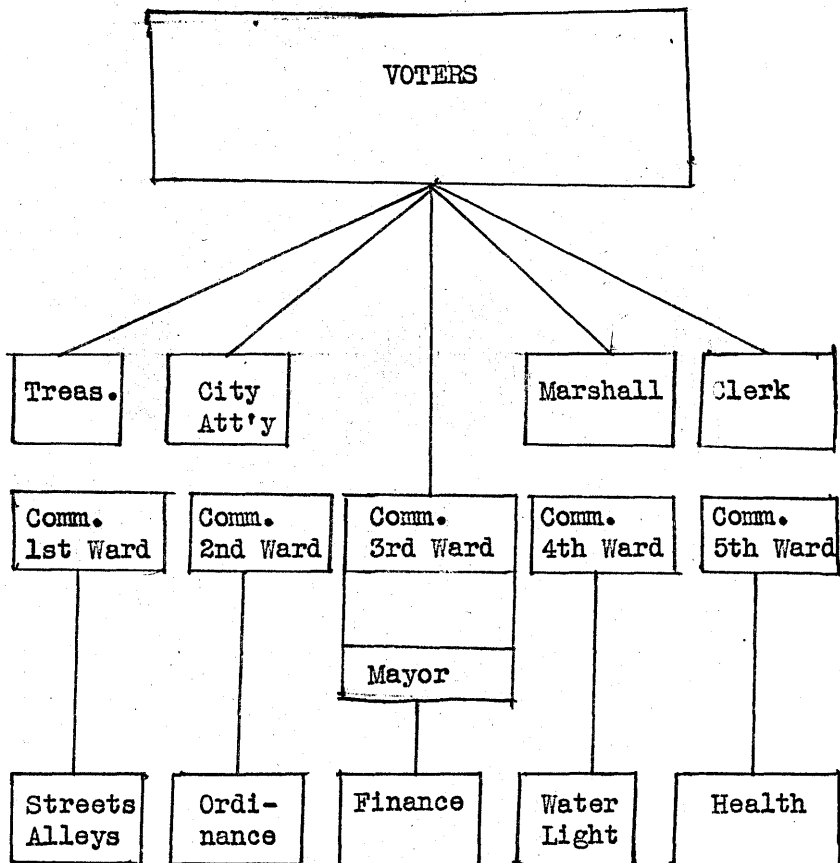
for two terms until 1915, were taken over by Mr. W. A. Kennedy at present a successful real estate dealer. He was followed by Mr. D. J. Turner, the present Mayor (1917) who occupied the executive seat until the election of Dr. Paxton in 1921. At the end of two terms Dr. Paxton was succeeded by Mr. I. W. Price (1925), who guided the policies of the municipality until he was followed by Mr. D. J. Turner as a result of the election of ^{21.} April 1929.

Form of Government.

The form of government adopted by the founders is still being used there today. It is a hybrid form of commission government. The town is divided into five wards or districts, one trustee being elected for each ward. The five commissioners or trustees are elected by wards at the city elections every two years in April of the odd numbered years in accordance with ^{22.} law. In addition to the five commissioners, the offices of town justice, town clerk, treasurer, and marshal are elective. The commissioners elect one of their number as chairman, who is ex officio mayor of the town.

The administrative functions of the city are exercised by committees appointed by the mayor, with the consent of the commission. Each commissioner serves as chairman of a standing committee. The charter provides for at least five of these; namely, Finance, Municipal Legislation, Public Thoroughfares, Public Utilities, and City Health. Each committee is composed

STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT



of three members including the chairman. The personnel of these committees are seemingly well selected purely on the basis of their knowledge and experience in the field covered by the respective committee. The present Mayor, a banker is chairman of the Finance committee. The committee on Health has two physicians on it, that on Legislation has a lawyer on it, and that of Public Thoroughfares is strengthened by an engineer and a contractor. Each of the committees has at least one Democrat on it. We are told that this is not a matter of form or tradition, but one of coincidence. The committee on sanitation works in co-operation with the county board of health. The marshal works in co-operation with the committee on streets and alleys in exercising such duties as supervising a public job and in enforcing the ordinance regarding street duty. This ordinance provides that each male citizen over twenty-one years of age must work on the streets in the service of the city for four days of eight hours^{23.} each out of a year, without compensation. The penalty for violating this provision is ten dollars. This is, of course, a relic of the old days of road maintenance.

Finance.

From the standpoint of finance, the city manifests no marks of unusual success. The assessed valuation of property as given by the county assessor is \$283,901.^{24.} For the town of Castle with a population about equal to that of Boley, it is \$129,231. For the town of Creek which had a population in 1920

of 29 more inhabitants than Boley, the assessed valuation is \$275,124. The total assessed valuation for the county is \$17,130,446. The per capita wealth of Boley, based on the population as given by the census reports (1920) and on the assessed valuation as given by the county assessor for 1929 is \$174.81. The per capita wealth of the entire county, based on the same reports, is \$683.82. The per capita indebtedness based on the 1920 census report and the present bonded indebtedness of the town is \$55.41.

The total indebtedness of the city is \$90,000. The total annual revenue from all taxes, assessments, fines, and forfeitures is \$10,000. The total expenditure of the city amounts annually to about \$900.00 exclusive of the salaries of the officials. The tax rate is about 3% on the dollar. Most of the revenue is used to pay the interest on bonds and to deposit in the sinking fund, the remainder being used for current expenses and salaries. The city bonds according to the clerk are disposed of without difficulty. They are usually sold in Oklahoma City.

Law enforcement.

The records of the city marshal and of the city attorney show that there are comparatively few violations of ordinances. During the past year there have been only two traffic offenses, and those were committed by non-residents of Boley, within the city limits. Traffic is almost inconsiderable during the middle of the week, but on Saturdays and Sundays, the con-

gestion is noticeable.

There were during the past year four arrests for fighting, five for gambling, and one for murder. The homicide rate compares favorably with that of the colored population of Kansas City, Missouri. Statistics compiled by the Kansas City Call show that fifty negroes were murdered by members of their own race during the year 1929^{27.} There are about 35,000 negroes in that city. The population of Boley is 1,624. No crimes of assault, rape, larceny, burglary, robbery, and arson are recorded for the past year. Records show that there have been no cases of rape or arson during the history of the city. For the county, records show that there have been during the past year (1929), 17 arrests for murder, 8 of whom were negroes, four of whose victims were white. There were also twenty-three cases of assault, eleven of whom were negroes, thirty-five cases of fighting, twenty-eight cases of gambling. None of the cases of fighting and six of the cases of gambling involved negroes. Seven cases of rape, nine cases of larceny, and six cases of burglary are recorded, three of the first, one^{28.} of the second, and two of the third group being negroes. Only one case of larceny or embezzlement is recorded in the history of the city. As a result of this crime, the Boley Bank and Trust Company in 1910 brought suit against the United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company for the bond issued by that company to indemnify the bank against loss that might be sustained by the fraud and^{29.} dishonesty of the above mentioned embezzler.

There seems to be a laxity in the enforcement of the 18th Amendment. The city is occasionally visited by federal prohibition agents. The local officers apparently do all that is within their power to enforce the law, but their efforts are to a great extent rendered ineffective, because of the seemingly indifferent attitude of the federal agents. It is supposed, however, that neither local nor federal officials actually exert their best efforts towards the enforcement of prohibition. Few raids are made on places which might be suspected of having and selling intoxicants. There were during the past year eight arrests for drunkenness.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS.

Public Schools.

The public schools are situated within a radius of one-half mile from the central business section. There are two such schools within the corporate limits of Boley, one a High School - the other an elementary school. There are four colored grade schools in the rural community within the same district in which the Boley schools are located; namely, District No. 13. Other negro districts in the county are Numbers 7, 12, 18, 42, and 43.

The Board of Education of Boley is made up of three members, exclusive of the superintendent all of whom, of course, are negroes. The system ^memploys two principals, thirteen teachers, two janitors and two clerks. The superintendent is a graduate of the Boley schools and obtained his higher training at Langston and Wilberforce Universities. The teachers, seven of whom are in the elementary school, have at least two years Normal school training. Most of them have two or more years of experience. (Three of the) six high school teachers have degrees.

The average cost of upkeep for the Boley public schools is \$17,000 per year, about \$31.00 per capita, based on total enrollment. The average salary for teachers in the system is

\$110.00 per month. The city Board of Education has complete control over school bond issues.

According to the report of the Chief High School Inspector of Oklahoma published in 1920, the average annual costs for schools in Okfuskee County were as follows: upkeep \$261,510; teachers' salaries \$919; per child in average attendance \$41.18; per child based on total enrollment \$29.20.^{30.} The report of the State Superintendent shows that the annual per capita costs in 1922 were \$37.87 for whites and \$24.10 for negroes.^{31.}

The total enrollment of the public schools (1929) is 541. The superintendent and also the teachers report that cases of discipline are infrequent.^{32.}

Among the achievements of the students we might note that a student from Boley won second place in a Negro state oratorical contest held at Oklahoma City in the spring of 1929. A girl from Boley won first prize in dressmaking at the National Negro Farmers' Conference held at Tuskegee in 1928. Records show that she is the third young lady from Boley to win this distinction. One of the Boley graduates of the class of 1929 made the highest average in grades in the quarterly examinations at Wiley College in the fall of 1929.

In the field of athletics the "Boley Bears" are known throughout the south, because of their all-victorious teams, especially in basketball. They took the state championship for colored high schools in 1923-24 in football. In basket-ball they

have twice won the state championship cup for boys. In the year 1926-27 they won that honor, at the state tournament held at Langston, and in 1928-29 at the tournament held at Boley, they were again victorious.

Enthusiasm for education seems to be as great there as among negroes in other parts of the country and perhaps more intense. Out of a total of fifteen high school graduates of the year 1928, one died and eleven of the remaining fourteen went to college.^{33.}

Their intra-mural activities consist of class plays, inter-class debates and inter-class track meets.

The superintendent is a young, wide-awake man. He has plans for future development which if carried out will be much to the advantage not only of Boley but also of the entire state. He seeks to bring about a consolidation of the grade schools located within a radius of six miles of Boley. At present, there are seven such schools, each having four or five teachers. It is the plan of the administrator to reduce the number of schools within the area to four, by consolidating some of them. If this is done larger and better equipped buildings may then be had. Inasmuch as the teaching force would be reduced the educational cost would be diminished.

C.M.E. Junior College.

The Centennial Methodist Junior College is one mile north of Boley on the highway which leads to Bristow. The Institution was incorporated on August 26, 1927 under its present name, but until that date bore the name of "The Oklahoma Normal and Industrial

Institute". The Institute was founded in 1906. It was created by the C.M.E. General Conference in May of that year, which was held in Memphis, Tenn. In carrying out the orders of the conference, a meeting was held on July 19 at Lane Chapel in Boley of the Indian Territory. At this meeting provision was made for purchasing land on which to erect the buildings. As a result four acres of land were purchased upon which a payment of one hundred dollars was made. The officials named the school "The Indian Mission High School". Later it was changed to "Oklahoma Normal and Industrial Institute". Courses in industrial arts and normal training were added.

The school has during its history had six presidents. From 1906 until 1911 classes were held in the Lane Chapel Methodist Church at a cost of fifty dollars a term. The first building was erected at a cost of \$3,000 in 1911. At present, the Institution owns five acres of land valued at \$5,000; one brick three-story building valued at \$25,000; a two-story frame building worth \$8,000; and a cottage, used as the president's home, valued at \$2,000.

The aim of the founders of the Institution was "To make it possible for every colored boy and girl in the state of Oklahoma to get a liberal education with a Christian training at the minimum expense". The motive which prompted its creation was to provide for the negro youth who were living in districts in which there were no high schools for colored. At the time of its creation there were

only five high schools for colored in the state. As a result, many of the youth were compelled to terminate their educational careers upon finishing the elementary school. The Institution at present does not restrict its attendance to residents of Oklahoma.

There were only two on the faculty, when the school opened. Today it has a faculty of fourteen. The enrollment on the opening date, Sept. 10, 1906, was five; at present (1929) it is ninety-five. The student body includes representatives of the states of Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, Arkansas, the majority, however, being residents of Oklahoma.

The college obtains its revenue from the following sources: the Methodist Episcopal Church - southern jurisdiction; the general conference fund, collected during the conference; the educational fund, a compulsory assessment made upon all M.E. Churches; donations; and tuition. The largest amount comes from the educational fund.

The course of study ranges from first grade to two years junior college, covering the fields of mathematics, English, history, science, romance and foreign languages, education, public speaking, agriculture, industrial arts, manual training and music. 35.

The president plans for the immediate future, the erection of two more buildings, a more fully equipped science laboratory, extension of library facilities, and the acquisition of additional equipment.

The school term is of nine months' duration, just as in the case of the public schools.

State School.

One of the most impressive and perhaps one of the best equipped institutions in the state of Oklahoma is situated on the outskirts of Boley. This is the State Training School for Boys, covering an area of 250 acres. It is located about one and one-half miles to the southeast of town. The state provides this school for delinquent and incorrigible negro boys between the ages of ten and sixteen, for which it makes an annual appropriation, which last year was the sum of \$82,000. The average expenses for the school per year are \$81,560.

The superintendent is widely known among both whites and blacks of the south as an influential citizen, an astute politician, and an able administrator. Through fourteen years of service in his present position and as the first and only one to hold the office he has shown that his ability extends beyond the limited field of politics. The holder of an A.B. and LL.B. from an eastern university and a man of vision, he is well prepared for the responsibilities of his office. He has selected as his corps of assistants some of the most capable of the race. Two of the teachers are graduates of the University of Kansas, two from Howard University, one from Wilberforce University, and one from Hampton Institute.

The school opened with three boys in 1915. Today it has one hundred ten. The offenses for which confinement to the in-

stitution is made are stealing, insubordination to parents, evading the compulsory school law, and other forms of juvenile delinquency. Many of the boys have been sent there by parents who felt that they were unable to properly control them.

It is the desire of officials to refer to it as the "State Training School" rather than as the "Reform School" for the psychological effect upon the public and upon the boys. The merit system is used, the child being released upon obtaining a certain number of merits. Demerits are given for improper conduct. Reports of the secretary show that those who are released usually make good. There have been only three second timers since the institution opened.

The prescribed Oklahoma High School training is offered. Especial emphasis is placed on vocational art and agricultural training. The boys are given practical training in agricultural pursuits, in cultivating two hundred acres of land, the products of which are consumed on the grounds. The school owns and operates its own light and water plants.

Such an institution, doubtless is an asset not only to the state, but to the race as a whole in that it reshapes the lives of many youths who for various reasons have started on the road to crime, immorality, and degradation. Upon visiting the State Training School one cannot help but notice the unusual cleanliness of both the buildings and the pupils. We are told that all are inspected every morning and the penalty for signs of uncleanness and for lack of neat-

ness in dress is a refusal to feed the offender until he is able to pass inspection. These as well as all rules and regulations of the institution are enforced without hesitation or compunction.

State authorities look with pride and favor upon the school. The superintendent, being an active politician as well as an able administrator, has gained the confidence of many officials. According to the report of Mabel Bassett, state commissioner of charities and religious services, this institution is one of the most efficient in the state.

36.

Work of Home Agent and Farm Agent.

The service rendered by the County Farm Agent and the Home Demonstration Agent is of great importance as a matter of practical education. These agents, a man and a woman, work in co-operation with the city schools through Four-H Club organizations. Although their work is county wide, their central offices are in Boley.

The Home Demonstration Agent is a product of a Kansas institution, having attended the K.S.T.C. of Emporia. The County Farm Agent, although most of his training was received at Langston University, has also attended the K.S.A.C. at Manhattan.

There are nine colored county agents and four colored Home Demonstration Agents in Oklahoma. Okfuskee County has two white County and Home Demonstration Agents and two colored. The salaries are provided for by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture in co-operation with the Oklahoma A. & M. College.

As elsewhere, the work consists of promoting higher stand-

ards of living among the rural population.

The demonstration agent performs her work principally through organizations of young people. There are thirty junior and twelve adult organizations in the county.

The juniors are reached through the schools, some of their work being done in the buildings after school hours. The adults hold meetings at various residences and in some cases at the school buildings also. Most of the work with adults consists of lecturing and demonstrating. The young people are given projects to work out. Those in the fields of foods and nutrition, clothing, home improvement, and poultry are considered major projects, while those in gardening, home dairy, health and sanitation are the minor projects.

Meetings are held in each of the fourteen club centers throughout the county at least once a month. The business of each meeting is handled by three groups, the business group, the demonstration group, and the recreation group. After the groups have finished the business of the meeting, the demonstration agent takes charge and proceeds to make corrections, demonstrations, and suggestions upon the work.

The products are placed on exhibition at county and state fairs and in the larger towns at community fairs. County fairs are held separately, as to races. Boley is the only place in Oklahoma at which a Negro County Fair has ever been held.

Some idea as to the nature and amount of work accomplished may be formed from considering the Report of the Home Agent for

1929.

"The splendid co-operation of the State Director of Extension Work and all other State and District officials has made it possible for us to do more efficient work in office and field.

- - - - - In arranging my program I tried to divide my time between office and field work in such a way as to get the best results. I spent ninety-eight days in office, while there received 1,232 telephone calls; 1171 personal calls from those seeking information; wrote nine news articles for the press; 578 letters to individuals and firms; ten circular letters to clubs, circulating 339 copies; and distributed 1,001 bulletins among a membership of 1,166.

The remaining 196 days were spend in field. The field work consisted of 186 Extension meetings, with 5,807 in attendance; 266 demonstrations; 8 local Leaders Training schools with an attendance of 1,025; 60 judging schools in poultry and canning, with an attendance of 569; trained 120 demonstration teams; superintended the County Fair at which there were 1,750 entries made; assisted with 4 H-Club activities at State Fair; accompanied 4 H-Club Delegation to Tuskegee. In performing my field work, I travelled 8,304 miles and visited 575 homes." This is the Home Agent's sixth year of service.

The work of the County Farm Agent is supplementary to that of the Home Agent. He deals with the men and young men, whereas the Home Agent directs her efforts towards training the female portion of the rural population. In some fields such as that of

poultry, there is an overlapping of work.

The Farm Agent, however, concerns himself chiefly with live stock, poultry, crops and soil, and farm engineering. In the fields of live stock and poultry he is concerned with production, care and management, sanitation, disease prevention, and marketing. In the fields of crops, soils and farm engineering, he deals with such problems as diversified farming; maximum production at minimum cost; use of certified seed and grain in planting; manipulation and care of machinery, labor-saving devices; and all other principles concerned with scientific farm administration. 38.

The minor fields in which he deals are: home ownership and care of farm houses, and rodent and pest control.

He also operates through 4 H-Clubs in somewhat the same manner that his co-worker does, the principal difference being that he makes frequent visits to farm houses for purposes of demonstration, correction, and suggestion, and, of course his work deals with men. This is the Farm Agent's fourth year of service.

That the work of these officials has not been in vain, is shown by the prizes which have been won by their pupils. During the past five years, twenty prizes have been won in clothing, canning, and home improvement, twelve of which were won in 1929 at the State Fair held at Oklahoma City. The following were won by persons from Boley - two first prizes in Home Improvement i.e. Interior Decoration; one second prize in Clothing; one second prize in Canning; and two third prizes in Canning. At the regional con-

ference of southern states, consisting of representatives from Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, and Tennessee, which was held at Tuskegee, Ala. in 1929, a young lady from Boley, the only entrant from Okfuskee County, won first prize
39.
in Clothing Construction.

The work of these agents in co-operation with that of the public, denominational, and correctional institutions, constitutes the educational framework of the community.

CHAPTER V

ECONOMIC ASPECTS.

Commercial

The economic and industrial aspects of the town are neither so complex nor so impressive. There are in all seventy-two places of business including all kinds of stores, work-shops, recreation halls, etc. The most progressive of these is, of course, the one and only Boley Bank, which has been referred to before. This institution is owned by the present Mayor. It has a capital of \$10,000, employs two tellers and two clerks. The latest systems of bookkeeping are employed and the most modern equipment used. The building is kept with the best of care and the motto "Service With a Smile" is apparently abided by, in spite of the fact that it is the only bank in town.

Among those showing unusual signs of progress we might mention Hazel Brothers Market, a well-equipped department store dealing with general merchandise. A modern frigid-air system has been recently installed. This store employs six clerks, four of whom are women, one cashier, one manager, and two delivery boys. The goods and foodstuffs handled are apparently of good quality and are sold at prices which approach those maintained by chain stores. This store has considerable local competition since there are six or seven grocery stores, and five or six clothing stores

within two to four blocks of it.

Although there are three other tailor shops in Boley, the one which is owned and operated by a charming young lady, a graduate of Tuskegee Institute, and a woman of good business qualities, is the most successful of the four.

Most of the business enterprises in the community do not seem to be enjoying average prosperity, but seem to be struggling for mere existence. The complaint advanced by many business men at meetings of the City's Business League is that the chain stores in the surrounding towns and cities, together with modern means of transportation just as in other parts of the United States create such a competition that it is almost impossible for them to attract and hold local trade. On the other hand, citizens complain that most of the stores handle an inferior quality of goods and that the prices are unreasonable. As to the validity of either contention, it is not our desire to speak. One thing is certain, however, and that is unless the business men of the city devise some plan by means of which the competition of chain stores in surrounding towns might be offset, many will be forced to discontinue business and only such stores as those competing with chain store prices and handling goods which meet the popular demand will remain in business. The business league of the city realizes this and are formulating plans to that effect at present.

Industrial.

The industrial activities of the city consist of ginning

of cotton. There are three gins in Boley owned and operated by local citizens. The by-products of the raw material are not utilized, because of insufficient mechanical equipment. They are sold to other plants in the vicinity.

According to the manager of one of the gins, a few white farmers patronize these plants. Failures and shortages in cotton crops in recent years has, according to reports, made it difficult to operate these industries profitably. There is no evidence that negro farmers within five miles of Boley take their cotton to any gins other than those of this community. When there is a good cotton crop these plants employ about fifteen men each, whereas now they have a total of only 27 employees. These three plants have been in operation six, nine, and fifteen years respectively. There is no evidence of any strikes, lock-outs, or any serious conflicts having occurred between the employers and employees.

Agricultural.

As has been stated, Boley is an agricultural community. The chief agricultural products are corn and cotton. Hogs, cattle, and poultry are among the leading farm products. The average farm covers seventy-five or eighty acres, although many are smaller and quite a number have an acreage of as high as two hundred. More than three-fourths of the farms within a radius of ten miles of the city limits are owned by negroes. This part of the county is referred to as the "Black Belt". Several farms are owned by whites and rented to negroes. Few are owned and operated by whites. Many

colored tenant farmers occupy land owned by members of their own race. No cases were found in which a white tenant farmer is occupying land owned by a negro.

Much of the produce of the farms are consumed by the unusually large families of the farmers - families of five to twelve children or more. The surplus corn, wheat, oats, etc. are taken to nearby cities other than Boley and sold either for cash or for finished products such as meal, flour, etc. There are no mills in Boley, hence such grains cannot be disposed of there. However, nearly all of the cotton raised within five miles of Boley is taken to the gins of that town, and much that is grown at a greater distance is also taken there.

Public Utilities.

With regard to public utilities and the manner in which they are operated, the city is entirely dependent. The telephone company is owned and operated by a private enterprise. The supply of water, light, etc. is obtained from a company in the nearest city. The more progressive element of the town expect to make it more independent with regard to such utilities in the near future. They plan to install a municipal light and gas plant.

The station agent has been employed as such for about fifteen years. His predecessor was a white man, who lived near Boley. Needless to say, this job requires a certain amount of literary training. His duties consist, of course, in posting train bulletins, sending and receiving telegrams, giving information to

travelers, selling tickets, etc. The station is similar in all respects to those in the surrounding towns. Even though very few whites pass through it, there is a separate waiting room for them. The post office employs a force of three in charge of a postmistress. The general delivery and box system is used. The official in charge reports that her work in the community gives her much pleasure. There is no evidence of any conflicts having occurred between her and the patrons. We also learn from her that Boley residents do not shift about frequently, but tend to occupy the same residences over long periods of time. Many have lived on the same residential site for ten or fifteen years. The United States Official Postal Guide ^{40.} reports that station - namely, station number 62337 as being a qualified station, with international money order offices and postal savings depositories.

There is little tendency for expansion with regard to recent public construction. For the past three years no additional municipal buildings have been constructed. There have been within the past three years three churches and one school building erected. The Masonic temple, a spacious three story structure of polished brick and limestone is used as a city hall.

The executive and legislative offices are located in this building on the second floor. The judicial office is in the Paxton building.

Most of the public buildings have been constructed under the direction of white contractors using negro help, most of which

was local. Several private buildings such as the bank building, the Myers' Hotel, and the Turner building were designed and constructed by colored contractors from Oklahoma City.

Boley, of course, being a small community, has very little public construction. The largest building is the Masonic Temple, which was constructed in 1924 at a cost of \$40,000. It bears that name because those who contributed most to its construction were Masons, and not because it is an exclusive lodge building.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL ASPECTS.

Religious Activities.

The religious framework of the community is quite extensive. Nine denominations claim a hold on the population. The total church membership is 1,054, divided among: First and Second Baptists; African Methodist Episcopal; Methodist Episcopal; Centennial Methodist Episcopal; Christian; Catholic; Sanctified; and Holy Jumper. The Baptists have a membership of 305; the three Methodist sects 408; the Catholics 197; and the remaining 144 are distributed among Christian, Sanctified and Holy Jumper denominations. The Sanctified church has the lowest membership. The Baptists are the oldest sects in the town, whereas the Holy Jumper sect is the youngest.

The ministers report an average attendance of about two-thirds of the total membership. The young people, as a whole, show an unusual interest in church. The B.Y.P.U. has an average attendance of 95 to 100 every Sunday. The Christian Endeavor Society of one Methodist church has an average attendance of 70 or 75. The compensation of the ministers is in the form of cash, the average salary being forty dollars a month. Many of the ministers do other work in addition to preaching. Several are financially independent and hence can afford to accept an inconsiderable salary. No

cases are found in which the preacher grants his services gratuitously. All of the ministers of the community have been properly ordained. Two of them have had college training. Four of them have the degree D.D.

Public Welfare Work.

The public welfare work of the community is carried on chiefly by churches, lodges, and private workers. The Orphan's Home, with an enrollment of ten, six boys and four girls, is maintained by the United Brothers of Friendship and Sisters of the Mysterious Ten Lodges. The orphans are sent to the public schools and are hired out to work after school hours and on Saturdays on the small farm adjoining the home. The products of this farm are used to help support the institution.

There is no County Home for Negroes in the county. The churches and lodges take care of adult dependents and those who are made dependent by temporary misfortunes. The wife of the present Mayor and several others of the leading women of the city exert their efforts towards charitable service. These ladies during Christmas week distributed baskets of provisions to those who turned their names in at various churches as being in dire need of such philanthropy. Only five such cases existed.

The state provides an institution at Taft for deaf, dumb, and blind negroes. There are no beggars, blind, crippled, or otherwise, soliciting on the streets of this city.

Recreation.

The recreational phase of life in Boley is enriched by a small theatre with a seating capacity of about 500; a dance hall large enough to accommodate about 75 couples; and several clubs formed for purposes of recreation.

The theatre is open two and sometimes three nights in the week; Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. The admission is ten and twenty-five cents. The types of shows brought to this theatre are on the whole good. Among some of the best which have been screened there are "The King of Kings", "The Phantom of The Opera", and "The Man Who Laughs". Other serial plays and pictures of minor importance are shown. According to the owner, the shows are well attended on Saturdays, but during the week, the attendance is quite small. A colored union operator is employed. The owner plans to install talking picture equipment in the near future. When that is done the admission will be raised. When asked whether he thought this would be a profitable undertaking he replied that by running only one night each week he could make the installation a profitable venture.

The dance hall is used on the average of twice a month. Most of the dances are public, an admission price of fifty cents being charged. The hall may be rented for private parties for twenty dollars per night.

There are no organized playgrounds for the children except those on the school grounds. Vacant lots about the city are

made useful for this purpose. The Boy Scouts, Girl Reserves, Four-H Clubs, and Junior American Legion afford outlets for the play impulses of the youth. The Young Men's Social and Literary Club and the Women's Art and Reading Club are intent upon developing the literary and artistic taste of the community.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND PARTY STRIFE.

In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to present a picture of this community from historical, governmental, economic, educational and social points of view. In this chapter, the purpose is to describe the political activities of the community. It is hoped that upon reading this chapter one will become aware of the political struggle that has been engaged in and to a certain extent is still being carried on by the citizens of Boley with certain county election officials, who sought to disfranchise them. No attempt will be made to offer a panacea for the political ailments discussed since the writer considers them a matter of evolution which Father Time alone can solve.

Partisan Attitudes.

Inasmuch as a man's attitudes and feelings are the chief determinants of his behavior, it is perhaps necessary that we give a resume of the prevailing political attitudes found in Boley and, doubtless, in many other communities.

Contrary to what might generally be believed, an analysis of the voters of this community discloses that the political reactions of the Negro are by no means unified. Manifestations of well defined political cleavage are not difficult to discover. Upon analyzing these divisions one finds at least three fairly dis-

tinct types of voters in Boley and it is likely that these types may be found in any community of Negroes.

First, there are those who, in the words of one instructor, "get behind the party banners and yell 'me too'". These are the "dyed-in-the-wool" Republicans. They still are influenced by the ghost of the immortal Lincoln and some consider it almost a crime for a Negro to stray from the folds of the Republican party. Not all colored republicans cling to this extreme point of view. Many of them cast the Republican ballot because they have assumed an attitude of indifference and are induced by friends to take such action.

Secondly, there are those who have developed an attitude of extreme allegiance to the Democratic party. They have insisted upon being allowed to vote in Democratic primaries. As an example of this attitude might be cited the case of Nixon v. Herndon referred to in the introduction. In this case, a Negro brought suit against a Democratic primary law which deprived colored citizens of the privilege of voting in primaries. The case was decided in favor of the defendant in the Texas court, but the United States Supreme Court held that the law in question was unconstitutional. It is expected that this decision will lead to the nullification of all similar rules in other states.

This attitude of antipathy for the Republican party and sympathy for the Democratic party seems to be the result of two principal causes. It is alleged that Negroes should vote the Demo-

cratic ticket because they have not been treated fairly in the other party. Many citizens of Boley state that nearly all of the Negro Republican committeemen have been removed from office. The Republican meetings, according to reports, are held in white hotels, at which places negroes cannot attend. In these ways the colored Republican is ostracised and treated as a stepchild of the party. In the words of one of Boley's leading Democrats "The Negroes are getting tired of being led by the nose on unfulfilled and insincere promises. They are becoming cognizant that 'there is no Santa Claus' and are striving to vote for those from whom they can demand favors and for those who are most able to fulfill such demands." He cites as the basis of this attitude a statement made by President McKinley to a committee of Negro citizens from a town in South Carolina, who were protesting against the murder of a Negro postmaster and his wife. The murder, perpetrated by incensed whites, had taken place in their community as an act of disapproval towards the appointment of a Negro postmaster. The President's advice was "The best thing for you people to do is to go back home and make friends with the people among whom you live, be they Democrats or Republicans".

41.

There is a third type of voter in Boley - the independent voter. They are few in number and do not seem to assume as active a position as voters of the other types. They vote for the man on the basis of his ability rather than his party. The present city officials were elected on an independent ticket. The present Mayor

assumes such an attitude towards city politics, but is a Republican in national and county politics. He states that it has been his desire to have non-partisan city elections. He also declares that in case he should consider the qualities of a county, state, or national Democratic candidate superior to those of a Republican, he would vote the Democratic ticket in spite of his past affiliations. As one of the chief exponents of this attitude he remarks that "Negroes here (referring to those who believe as he does) feel that Negroes should split their vote in order to be in touch with any major party that might be elected". In analyzing the attitude of the Independents, it might be said that some believe in voting for the man who is best qualified for the office; others, for the man whom they think will do them the most good, regardless of party, and perhaps, regardless of qualifications.

Disfranchisement.

The problem of Negro disfranchisement in the southern states is one of the most widely known as well as one of the most important factors in the American political world. Oklahoma as a state has contributed her share to such malpractice. This, the youngest state in the Union, inserted into her constitution a grandfather clause, by means of which it deprived its colored citizenry of the privilege of voting until 1915 when the provision was declared unconstitutional. Inasmuch as registration twenty days before election day was pre-requisite to voting, the process of registration was used as a means of disfranchisement. Registration is not com-

pulsory in Boley in order to vote in municipal elections.

The problem of disfranchisement presents itself in a unique manner in a community such as Boley. Those who seek to deprive the Negroes of their votes have no control whatever over city elections in Boley. In mixed cities where disfranchisement tactics are practiced the Negro voters are incapacitated not only in general elections, but also in municipal elections. This situation is typical of the south. As a voter in an independent community, such as Boley, the colored citizen confronts no opposition or trickery in casting his ballot in city elections, but this study reveals that when it comes to voting in general elections he is confronted by the usual difficulty.

By far the largest number of the voters of Boley are Republican. The women voters are divided, the majority of them being aligned with the Republicans. Most of the precincts surrounding Boley are Democratic, some of them by only a few votes, *but* some, such as Creek No. 1 and Creek No. 2 are usually overwhelmingly Republican. It is reported that the Democratic leaders fear that if the full vote of Boley should be cast it would be sufficient to carry the election in favor of the Republicans. Since this has never been done it is impossible to say what the result would be because one cannot predict the political reactions that would be made in general elections by the thousand or more qualified voters of that community. It is likely, however, that most of the votes would be Republican.

According to the records of the county election board, the largest vote ever polled in a general (i.e. not municipal) election

in Boley was in 1926, when 490 ballots were cast, of which 433 were Republican. From 1916 to 1926, the average vote of Boley in general elections was about 96. This vote was Democratic until 1924, when no doubt as a result of the Davis case (to be discussed later),^{43.} it became overwhelmingly Republican. Contrast this average of 96 in general elections with that of 900 in municipal elections. How is it possible that the vote of this city in general elections is barely 10% of its vote in municipal elections? Nowhere is the problem of disfranchisement more clearly shown than in this city, where the voting strength, in municipal elections, over which county officials have no control, is ten times greater than that in general elections which are under control of the county election officials. In the face of these figures one is forced to inquire "What methods have been employed by these officials to reduce the average vote of Boley in city elections of more than 900 votes, to the small and sub-normal vote of 96 in general elections?"

Of course, the grandfather clause of the Constitution of Oklahoma deprived most Negroes of the state of the privilege of voting in general elections and also, in case of mixed cities, in city elections as well. The citizens of Boley were fortunate in that they were unhampered in voting in municipal elections but they were by no means exempt from the discriminating effects of this undemocratic clause. Before 1916 Boley was a part of the Paden Precinct. The registration polls were placed at Paden City, six miles from Boley. Very few Boley citizens registered, because of the distance

to the polls and also because of the antagonistic spirit with which they would be received at the polls. The election judges were partial in their application of reading and writing tests. Two cases might be cited in which such partiality was shown. Barnett, a former merchant of Boley, who wrote an unusually good hand, due to practice and training, attempted to register at Paden in 1910. The Judge told him that he could not read his writing. Barnett retorted, "Well, I'm not responsible for your damned ignorance" and immediately left the polls. Another, the Rev. Mr. Foster, who had run for Justice of the Peace for Boley and who, according to reports, was a man of no meager intelligence, was denied the privilege of voting in 1912 on the grounds that his writing was not legible and that he could not read the Constitution well enough.

One might think that after the nullification of this clause Negroes would be unhampered in exercising the privilege of suffrage, but such was not the case. Although the citizens of Boley were not interfered with in voting in city elections, they were disfranchised for general elections by other methods, which were put into practice immediately after the annulment of the grandfather provision. These methods consisted of: actual intimidation of Negroes attempting to register, agreement on the part of election officials to register as few Negroes as possible, and gerrymander of the districts.

The device of frightening the colored citizens out of

their votes, proved to a certain extent effective because there were very few who would care to risk their lives in order to get an opportunity to vote. Nevertheless, it was the courage of those few which caused officials to seek other means to accomplish their ends.

The struggle for the ballot on the part of the citizens of this community is a unique one inasmuch as there is evidence that a few Negro democrats were used by county officials to minimize the Negro Republican vote. Several citizens testify that they lived in Boley for periods ranging from five to sixteen years and were unable to vote. Until 1916 the grandfather clause of the Oklahoma Constitution was used to disfranchise Negro voters. This clause was declared void by the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Guinn v. U.S.* cited earlier. After this was done, evidence seems to indicate that attempts were made to disfranchise the colored population by preventing them from registering. Until 1924 this device was used quite successfully. At that time the U.S. Court of Appeals in the Davis case issued a writ of mandamus compelling election officials to register certain Boley citizens as well as 44. others who might desire to register in that city. In order to get a more complete understanding of the case it is perhaps necessary to consider the conditions which led up to it.

There is evidence that it was exceedingly difficult for Negroes, especially Republicans, to register inasmuch as certain Negro Democrats were appointed as registers on the condition that

they register as few Republican members of their race as possible. It is said by numerous citizens that, these registrars when appointed would evade those seeking to register by leaving the city for a certain period, by failing to publish notices of their appointment and in some cases by openly refusing to register citizens. The Negro Republicans decided in 1924 to co-operate in order to resist these unfair and illegal tactics. Accordingly, in May of that year a Republican club was organized, and a committee was immediately appointed to confer with the county registrar with regard to registering citizens of Boley. According to the committee, upon visiting the registrar they were told that it was not in the interests of the Democratic party to register any Negroes in Boley. The official further declared that if the citizens of Boley ever succeeded in registering, he would leave the county. A member of the committee retorted "You may as well get ready to leave because we're going to register". Finally, after a prolonged and heated discussion, the registrar promised that before midnight, he would appoint a certain man as precinct registrar, whose name had been suggested by the committee. It is reported that he failed to keep his promise and so far as the citizens of Boley were able to find out, no one was appointed.

Realizing that election day was fast approaching and that there was no time to lose, the officials of the Republican party of Boley proceeded more rapidly with their plans. The president of the organization went to Muskogee at once, to seek legal counsel. After interviewing the United States District Attorney for the Eastern

District, he sought the professional services of a judge named Kennamer. Upon the advice of this lawyer, he returned to Boley and secured 550 duly sworn and signed affidavits, from citizens who had tried to register, but were prevented from doing so on account of their color. A temporary injunction was granted prohibiting officials from barring Negroes from the Polls. Mandamus proceedings were brought against the county election officials to compel them to register Negro voters, especially those whose names were on the affidavits. Decision in the lower court was for the plaintiffs. The defendants, the county election officials, thereupon appealed the case to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals where the decision of the lower court was affirmed.

The effect of this case was to guarantee to Negroes of Boley, an effective means of registering. The result of this legal triumph became immediately noticeable. In the following general election (1926) about 450 Republicans of Boley cast ballots and about 50 Democrats, whereas in the election of 1922, there were only 25 Republican and 95 Democratic votes cast.

Facts show that after this important case was won, which put a stop to one method of disfranchising citizens of Boley, another device was attempted. In 1928, another precinct was created by cutting off the northern part of the Boley precinct and placing it, together with portions of three other precincts, in a new and separate division. The precincts surrounding Boley are Democratic. Boley is nearly three to one Republican. In order for those who had hitherto

been voting in the Boley precinct to be eligible to vote, it was necessary that they should be registered in the new district. Apparently the former Boley voters, as well as other Negroes, again had difficulty in getting registered. As a result, another case was brought up, that of R. F. Rogers vs. Tom Hill et al. Rogers was precinct chairman of Creek precinct No. 1, for the Republican party. Hill was the county registrar. This case is still pending (1929), a temporary injunction having been issued compelling county officials to register Negroes until the final decision is made.⁴⁵

As a result of this case federal authorities were sent to investigate the situation. At present (1929) six men are under federal indictment and are out on bonds of \$3,000 each charged with such illegal practices as unfairly changing precinct lines and refusing to register Negro voters in Okfuskee County. Their trial is scheduled for the spring of 1930.

According to the president of the Boley Republican Club and the principal plaintiff in the first case (1924) as well as one of the plaintiffs in the second case (1926) the total expenditure for fighting these cases was \$3,500. The money was donated by Negroes throughout the county.

City Elections.

According to the records of the city clerk, the average vote in city elections is about 900. The returns of the last election may serve to show how the votes in city elections are distributed. The present Mayor, who was elected by the third ward,

ran on an independent ticket and received an overwhelming majority vote. The election returns for 1929 are as follows: first ward, 250 Republican and 50 Independent; second ward, 194 Independent; third ward, 195 Independent, 85 Republican; fourth ward, 204 Republican, 80 Independent; and fifth ward, 205 Republican, 80 Independent.
46.

An attempt was made in 1929 to hold a non-partisan election, according to the Mayor and city clerk, but the Republicans insisted upon placing candidates in the field. They ran candidates in all wards except the second and were successful in three. They met in May and set forth their principles in a platform of eight planks.

Platform of The Republican Party of Boley.

1. We pledge ourselves to urge the people to pay their delinquent taxes so that the funds will be available to pay the bonds when due.
2. The Republican party of Boley believes in the free exercise of the ballot. From 1907 to 1924 only 131 people in and around Boley were able to vote. Today the party has over 1,000 registered throughout the county. We registered you and ask that you support our ticket.
3. We pledge ourselves to co-operate with all citizens to promote harmony and good will with the citizens who live and around Boley in order that confidence and trade will be improved for the benefit of all.
4. We pledge ourselves to co-operate with the business and professional men and the citizens of all creeds and walks; to organize commercial and booster clubs for advertising and bringing in good, substantial and progressive citizens who will help us make a greater, grander Boley.

5. We pledge ourselves to take the initiative in co-operating with all citizens of all walks and occupations; to promote plans to secure industries that will help give the city a small payroll and continue to develop same for our young men and women.
6. The Republican party of Boley stands pledged to thoroughly examine all good suggestions of individuals, ladies and men's clubs, business groups and farm organizations that will help to build a greater Boley, through the process of complete co-operation.
7. The Republican party has not been in control of Boley; therefore we are asking this year the full support of all citizens in order that the conditions now existing may be fully adjusted for the benefit of all.
8. A vote for the Republican party of Boley means peace, happiness, and prosperity.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY.

Analysis of Data.

As stated before, the purpose of this writing has been to present a picture of one of the few independent Negro towns; a community in which there are no whites and in which all political, economic, and social affairs are under control of colored citizens. The writer has attempted to paint the picture as accurately and impartially as possible. To refrain from overstatement is difficult in treating a subject of this kind. To understate, however, is equally undesirable. The attempt has been made to maintain that middle ground in which the solution to this difficult task lies. It is hoped that no statement can be justly interpreted as one of exaggerated import nor one of incomplete and inadequate expression.

The generalizations which are to be drawn from the data herein presented will be determined to a great extent by the reader. Nevertheless there are several outstanding characteristics which we shall consider for purposes of analysis. Inasmuch as certain questions were raised at the beginning of this discourse, it is perhaps important that we attempt to answer them in so far as the foregoing material will permit.

To what extent has the Negro made use of his political, economic, and social opportunities, so far as can be determined by the study of

a single Negro American city?

What political, economic, and social tendencies are manifest in a community of American Negroes as citizens of an independent, self-governing, all-Negro city?

In the field of politics, it is shown that in the absence of discriminating practices the average voting strength of this community of 2,000 is about 900, the average vote in city elections. In general elections, however, where they meet with opposition to the exercise of their voting privileges, the average vote in past elections has been less than 100. This would justify the conclusion that the Negro, when left alone makes use of his political advantages.

According to a study made by J. C. Rose in some southern states not more than one adult male Negro out of every hundred voted, even at presidential elections.^{47.} We have shown that since 1916 the average vote cast by citizens of Boley, a town of about 2,000 was about 90. We find that in this community more than $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the population cast ballots in general elections. The average vote in general elections shows that in spite of efforts on the part of county election officials to disfranchise them, about 9% of the qualified voters of Boley cast ballots in general elections. As compared with the estimate made by Rose the average voting strength of this city has been nine times greater than that of the general Negro population of the south. It was shown,

however, that due to methods used to disfranchise the Negro Republicans, most of the votes cast by Boley citizens in general elections were Democratic.

Porter, in referring to the disfranchisement of the Negro and to the attitude taken by the courts of the southern states on the question, declares "Tribunals very early began to exhibit a tendency to keep 'hands off' the southerners and not force the issue with them. All the burden of proof was laid upon the Negro to show that he was being deprived of a right and the courts took advantage of technicalities and ambiguities^{48.} to make the Negro's position all the harder."

Realizing that the "burden of proof" lay upon their shoulders, the citizens of Boley in 1924 banded themselves together for the purpose of showing that they were being deprived of a right and as we have shown were relatively successful in supporting their contention.

The statement made by Kelly Miller in 1906 appears obsolete so far as Boley is concerned. Referring to the small Negro vote in the southern states he states "Indifference more^{49.} than any other cause accounts for this condition." As a rule the average city has a larger vote in general elections than in local elections but here is one in which the average vote in city elections is ten times greater than that in general elections. This could hardly be caused by indifference.

Sait, writing in 1927, states that politics "hardly

ranks at all among the interests of the Southern Negro today."

Stone stated in 1908 that the Negro's non-participation in pol-

51.

itics was due to "the inherent lethargy of the race." These statements are certainly not true of Boley to-day. It has been shown that in this city of 2,000, the average number of votes cast in municipal elections is 900. This is 80% of the eligible voting population. Boley has a relatively high average vote as compared with other cities throughout the country. Contrast this voting strength of 80% with that of the municipal election of 1923 in Chicago at which only 50% of the qualified electors cast ballots. The vote in Chicago, as is generally known, is by no means an uncommon situation. Practically the same condition was found in the country at large in 1920, for only one-half of the 54,000,000 adult citizens in the United States participated in the presidential election held in that year. Thus we see that citizens of Boley when left alone and unhampered by discriminatory political tactics, maintain an average voting strength in city elections which is greater by 30% than that of other cities of the United States in presidential elections. After the first legal victory in 1924 which, as we have seen, put a stop to one method used to disfranchise citizens of Boley, the number of ballots cast in presidential elections increased from an average of 90 to a vote of 450. This is an increase in voting strength from about 8% to about 40%. It is reasonable to assume that if all political barriers were removed, the vote in general elections would at least

equal that in municipal elections.

This is hardly "inherent lethargy", indeed, quite the contrary. It would seem to indicate that if the Southern Negro appears to be disinterested in voting, this lack of interest cannot properly be charged to inherent racial lethargy, but to environmental differences. These differences would seem to be more a matter of environmental conditioning than a matter of racial heritage. In the south as a whole, where the Negro has for more than fifty years been subject to methods of disfranchisement it is natural that he should to some extent lose interest in voting. In Boley, however, where the citizens have for a quarter of a century been totally free from disfranchisement in their local politics, an unusual amount of political interest is shown. It seems unreasonable to say that citizens, who presented themselves at places of registration in the face of danger of life or limb, as those of Boley did at Paden, are not interested in voting. Nor can it be concluded that citizens, who voluntarily organized political clubs and together with other Negroes of that county contributed \$3,500 for the sole purpose of financing legal battles for their right of suffrage, are victims of inherent racial lethargy, with regard to politics.

The interest shown by the citizens of Boley in voting in municipal elections, together with the struggles which they have had in attempting to vote in general elections would justify one in saying that so far as this city is concerned, the statements

made by the writers cited above are, by no means, applicable.

On the contrary it may be said that the situation at Boley indicates that the Negro, when given an opportunity, votes as well as citizens of other races.

Facts indicate that in this community party prejudices are on the whole subordinated to the interests of the community. As has been stated, the elections for the most part have been non-partisan except in 1929. The present mayor was elected on an independent ticket as trustee of 3rd Ward and subsequently elected mayor by the council, the majority of whose members were Republican. It was also shown by the facts that the chief executive appoints Democrats as well as Republicans to offices of the city.

There are perhaps no outstanding tendencies in the field of economics which could be considered peculiar to this particular community. There is, however, more of a tendency on part of patrons and customers to purchase from certain merchants because of their business qualities and not so much because of their race. In some mixed communities colored citizens trade with members of their own race, because they are not properly treated by white merchants and perhaps because of racial loyalty. In this community there is a freer economic choice. They buy from certain merchants from economic rather than sentimental motives. There is room for improvement in the management of business. The deficiency here is seemingly due partly to lack of

business training on part of the merchants and partly due to the universally felt competition of chain stores.

There are few distinct social tendencies which would set this community apart from other communities of Negroes. There are no inter-racial conflicts, of course, and the spirit of good will apparently prevails throughout the social intermingling. There is no residential problem as in the case of most mixed towns, when the Negro residential district becomes too congested or otherwise undesirable, forcing colored citizens to move into adjacent white neighborhoods.

There is one section of the town which might be considered an exclusive residential district in that it is inhabited principally by the professional and business classes of the population. This condition prevails to some extent in mixed communities, unless the colored population is restricted to a small and well defined area in which case the Negroes of the upper strata of society are forced to live among those of the lower classes.

One might note, however, that there are quite a number of religious denominations for a community of this size, which might indicate an unusual amount and variety of emotional reaction on the part of the citizens. On the whole it may be said that the social behavior of residents of Boley is no different from that of citizens of any other community of Negroes in as much as the customary law of social segregation is of universal application.

To what extent does racial homogeneity influence

the political, economic, and social conditions of a municipality of American Negroes?

In the field of politics, we find in this city an unhampered opportunity for advancement. Every youth of ability has an equal chance to rise to a position of leadership. His mental picture of himself as mayor, councilman, city attorney, city clerk, etc. is not merely an idle dream. It is an attainable goal. This is one advantage which a young citizen of Boley has over a young man of his race who lives in a city of mixed population.

The factor of racial homogeneity makes little important difference in the field of economics. The Negro in a mixed community, who has business training and the necessary capital would probably be as successful as his brother in a city like Boley. There is, however, one distinct advantage. In an independent Negro town the colored business man can exercise a controlling influence on such bodies as the Chamber of Commerce, Board of Trade, Business Leagues, etc. This is seldom, if ever, true of cities of mixed population.

Considered from a sociological point of view, this community produces an attitude which is by no means satisfactory. The element of racial homogeneity is seemingly conducive to the intensification of racial hatred. One need not converse with many citizens of Boley to become convinced that racial prejudice is not confined to members of the white race. The mass of citizens who

do not come in contact with many whites have developed an unfavorable attitude towards them. Although such a town as Boley may be advantageous in other respects, it might be said to be detrimental to the solution of one of the most perplexing problems of the day - the race problem. Though we would not attempt to suggest any solution, we venture to say that such solution is more likely to come from association and understanding than from isolation and misunderstanding. We cannot escape the fact that personality is stronger than race, but it is lamentable that often this human element is denied an opportunity because of the artificial barriers of racial segregation.

It was the force of personality which caused Captain Boley, a typical southerner, to develop enough confidence in T. M. Haynes, though the latter's face was dark, to suggest that he was capable of governing a community. Boley was the first city of its kind in the United States. Just as it is often said that the office of President of the United States was created as a result of the existence of such a personality as George Washington, it might also be said that the office of Mayor of an independent Negro city was created as a result of the existence of such a personality as Thomas M. Haynes.

Imp The answers to the questions set forth are necessarily incomplete, partly because of the inaccuracy of any general statement concerning human beings and partly because this is a study of a single community. Similar and more thorough investigations of other all-Negro cities will be necessary in order that some comparative

value might be given to the data herein presented. As it stands it is, of course, essentially a descriptive treatment.

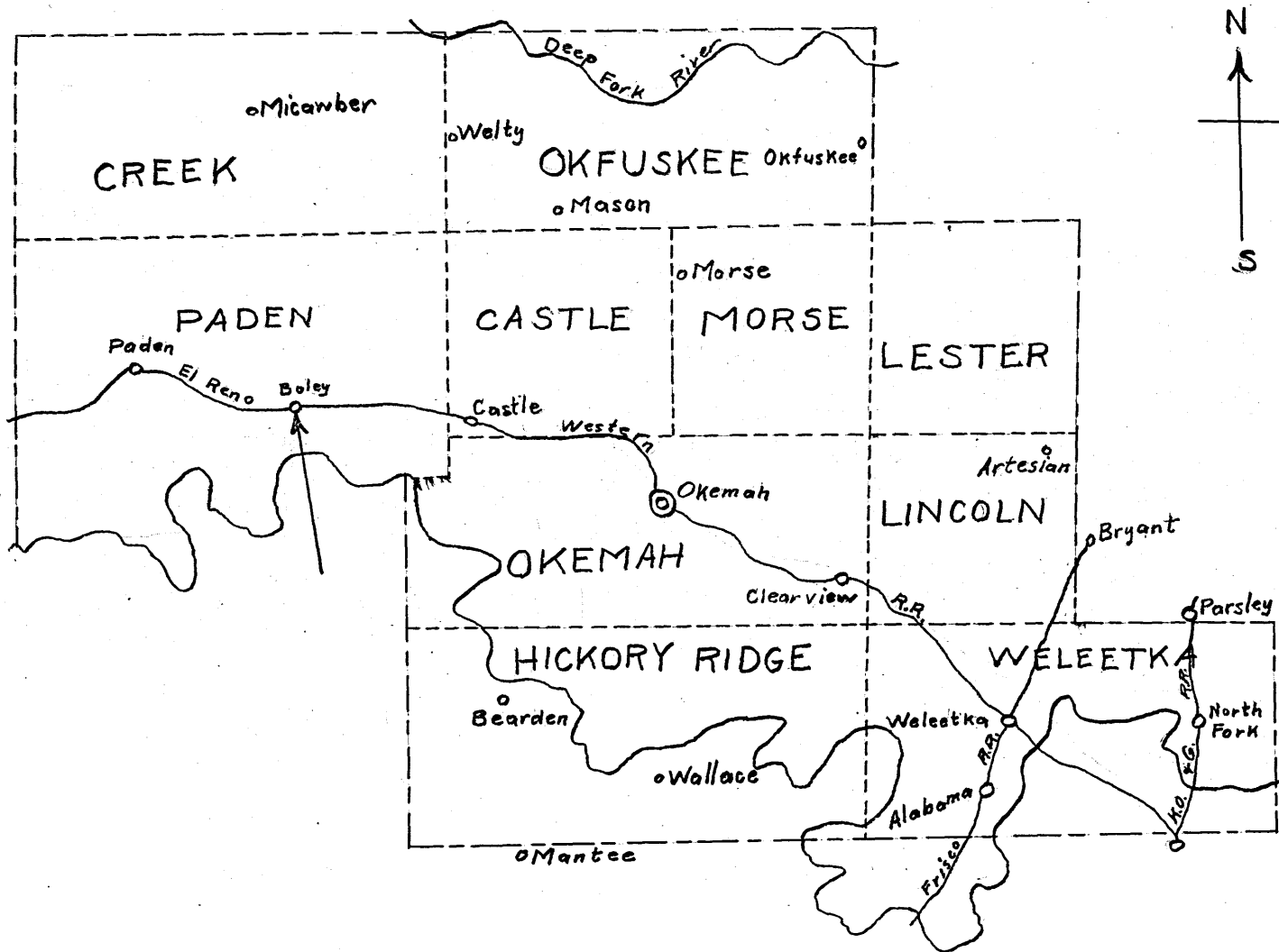
Political Significance of Boley.

From a political standpoint an independent Negro community like Boley is an asset to the race. It affords an opportunity for experience in practical politics, such as cannot be had by colored citizens in towns of mixed population. It provides for the development of municipal leaders, who have an opportunity to work their way up from the ranks of the most humble citizens to those of officialdom. Such political laboratories are especially advantageous to southern Negroes, whose political ambitions are so adversely thwarted by whites. Even in northern cities, where the political activity of the Negro is less limited, he is subject to definite control by white leaders of those cities. This is not the case in Boley for here the colored citizen is not interfered with in the management of municipal affairs so long as no measures are fostered that are contrary to the state and national laws.

In a community of this kind the average voter shows a definite result of the political experience provided. One method used to test this was that of interviewing some seven or eight citizens chosen at random in order to ascertain their political interest and knowledge. One of those interviewed was a street laborer. In all cases, the responses given were more than adequate to convince one that the persons being interviewed were quite well informed regarding the structure of government, the officials and their duties, and

other important features of the local government. This method, which is a common one in the field of social science, was tried in the city of Lawrence and out of eight persons only two were able to give a fairly intelligible explanation of the features of the local government.

As one of the leading citizens of Boley says "Boley is the greatest school in the world from the fact that we are forced to learn things that one doesn't have to know in a mixed town, especially in the line of municipal government."



OKFUSKEE COUNTY

1 Inch = 5 Miles

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28. Records of County Sheriff, Okemah, Okla.
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After all, the chief source of the material herein presented has been that of personal interviews, the most fruitful of which are those held with the following:—

Mayor of Boley

City Clerk of Boley

City Attorney of Boley

City Marshal of Boley

Editor of Boley News.

President and Secretary of Boley Republican Club

President and Secretary of Boley Democratic Club

Superintendent of Boley Public Schools

Superintendent of State Training Schools

President of C. M. E. Junior College

Home Demonstration Agent. Boley.

County Farm Agent. Boley.

County Assessor. Okemah.

Postmistress of Boley

Ministers

Pioneer citizens

Business Men and Women

Managers of Gins. Boley.

Station Agent. Boley.

Owner of Boley Telephone Company